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RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 7949
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2462
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 1824
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 5841
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 5596
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2214
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU
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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 2007

In Today's Papers

Investigation against Coup Allegations

Sabah, Aksam, Zaman, Hurriyet and others: Today's papers report that the Bakirkoy and Sisli district prosecutors in Istanbul have initiated investigation into military coup allegations made in former Naval Forces Commander Ozden Ornek's diaries, published by Nokta magazine. In the crime complaint the prosecutors received it was alleged that retired commanders Sener Eruygur (Gendarme), Ibrahim Firtina (Air Force), Aytac Yalman (Land Forces) and Ozden Ornek (Naval Forces) violated the Constitution by making preparations against the Constitutional order of the country.

Pro-Ocalan Protests in Sanliurfa, Protests against the Prosecutor in Cizre

Sabah reports that on the occasion of the birthday of jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, a group of his supporters wanted to go to his hometown Omerli village in the Halfeti district of Sanliurfa Province. When security forces obstructed the group's entry into the village, protestors, chanting pro-Ocalan slogans, began to stone the police who fired shots into the air. One policeman and some of the protestors were slightly injured during the clashes.

Meanwhile, Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir, together with DTP and former DEP members (Kurdish political parties) went to Cizre to support Cizre Mayor Aydin Budak who was arrested for a "praising terrorism and terrorists" in a speech he made during Nevruz celebrations last month. Around 3,000 people met Baydemir on his arrival and extra security measures were taken around the municipality building in Cizre.

April 14 Republican Rally Tension

Sabah, Hurriyet, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet, Radikal and others: PM Erdogan reacted harshly to claims that exams were postponed at some universities in Ankara to allow students to attend a "Republican Rally" to be held two days before official presidential election process starts. Organized by the Ataturk Thought Association, the

rally is expected to attract hundreds of thousands of marchers. The Republican Rally Organization head Ali Ercan said yesterday, "We want to have a President who will adopt the fundamental principles of the Republic. Our stance is a warning and if there isn't compromise over the names of the candidates, we'll continue to react. I don't understand why the PM reacted so harshly to the rally. We have not demanded anything special."

Meanwhile, AKP deputy group leader Kapusuz claimed that major opposition party CHP is behind the rally. However, CHP leader Baykal denied the allegations.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq, US-Turkey Relationship

Commenting in the mainstream daily Milliyet, Semih Idiz urges Turkey to accept the new reality in Iraq: "Turkey has some trust problems with two of Iraq's major groups, the Shiites and the Kurds. The new facts of life in Iraq are not clearly understood in Turkey. The fact is that the Shiites and the Kurds are re-shaping the new Iraq. Unfortunately, Ankara has not been able to establish a positive dialog with these two elements and that is why Ankara remains a spectator to the developments in Iraq. Meanwhile, not only in Iraq but also in the rest of the world, there is this spreading belief that Turkey is ready to interfere with Iraq's potential stability to fulfill its own interests. In order to increase its effectiveness in Iraq, Turkey should eliminate this impression and convince everyone that Turkey is not a threat to Iraq. The resolution of the Kirkuk and PKK issues depends on this."

Cengiz Candar, writing in the economic-political daily Referans, maintains when it comes to US-Turkey relations, "no news is good news": "Former US Ambassador to Turkey Morton Abramowitz claims that there is no place for Turkey recently on Washington's agenda. This situation might disturb many people in Turkey. However, at

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this very critical election period, Washington's attitude could be considered beneficial for Turkey. This situation reminds me the phrase 'no news is good news'. If anyone asks me what the most characteristic angle of the US-Turkey relations is lately, my answer would be 'no news is good news'. What happens if the draft Armenian Resolution passes Congress? Well, then, Turkey will definitely take a place in Washington's agenda."

TV Highlights
NTV, 6.00 A.M.

Domestic News

- The government has launched work to pass a regulation which will permit Turks living abroad to vote in Turkish general elections.
- Visiting Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser al-Muhammad al-Sabah has promised to open a Kuwaiti commercial office in Turkish Cyprus.
- Turkey has refused to allow the transit through Turkey of six trucks carrying water tanks dispatched by the government of South Korea for the "Interior Ministry of Kurdistan Regional Government."

- The Turkish Foreign Ministry has dispatched humanitarian aid to Afghanistan after heavy floods and avalanches killed dozens in the country.

International News

- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has announced 15 British sailors will be released as an Easter gift to the British people.
- Iran's official news agency IRNA said an Iranian representative has been authorized to meet the five Iranian diplomats who have been held in Iraq by the American forces since January.
- US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi met with Bashar Assad in Damascus despite White House objections, saying she pressed the Syrian leader over his country's support for militant groups.

- Gunmen opened fire on a minibus carrying workers in a Sunni area west of Kirkuk, killing eleven people.

- On the International Day dedicated to curbing landmines, a top UN peacekeeping official called for more efforts to curtail landmines which kill some 20,000 every year.

WILSON